

Present:

Councillor Bains, Acting Chair
D. Bondar
R. Brar
H. Dhillon
B. Favaro
P. Harrison
S. Keulen
M. Schutzbank
R. Sihota
R. Vanderende

Absent:

Councillor Bose
W. Kim
S. Rai
R. Tamis

Staff Present:

M. Kischnick, Senior Planner
S. Meng, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTIONS

1. Adoption of the Agenda

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by M. Schutzbank
That the agenda of the Agricultural and Food
Policy Committee meeting of October 3, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – September 5, 2023

It was

Moved by R. Brar
Seconded by H. Dhillon
That the minutes of the Agricultural and
Food Policy Committee meeting held September 5, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

R. Sihota joined the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

R. Vanderende joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

B. DELEGATION**1. Deirdre Goudriaan, Seeds of Change Surrey Leadership Team and Garrett Johnson, Black Business Association of BC, Representative for SOC's Black, African, and Caribbean Advisory**

The Seeds of Change Surrey Leader and Strategic Advisor for the Black Business Association of B.C. provided a brief introduction on the need for Surrey to have a food strategy, food charter, and a vision for the community where everyone has equitable access to food that is affordable, culturally preferable, nutritious and safe. The following information was highlighted:

- Seeds of Change Surrey (SOCS) has been operating over 20 years and they aim to resolve food focused issues, support and promote the understanding of advocacy in all parts of the food system through growing, harvesting, packaging, processing, distribution, retail and market consumption and food waste management. SOCS has partnered with multiple organizations who share a common vision of working toward a just food system where everyone has equitable and dignified access to affordable, culturally preferable, nutritious and safe food.
- At SOCS inception in 2005, the company focused on providing community gardens, food literacy, emergency food relief work, and worked towards reducing food waste. In 2018, they moved towards becoming a collective impact system where they started working more upstream in the food system. In 2020, SOCS began to explore more systemic inequities that exist in the food system.
- SOCS food recovery program in Surrey have successfully diverted over 400,000 kilograms of food waste. Since the program began in 2021, the edible food they have saved is the equivalent of almost half a million meals that have been distributed to the marginalized community. The food was valued at \$1.3 million and came from farms, retailers and wholesalers.
- SOCS also delivered food literacy programs throughout the city and are involved with group of partners working on food literacy. They also focused on the development of new community gardens and the food asset map for the city of Surrey on Cosmos.
- Income is the strongest predictor for impacting food insecurity. Research shows that household food insecurity cannot be fixed through food-based initiatives or charitable efforts to address food and require income based solutions instead. One in seven households in B.C. experience household food insecurity and one in six children in B.C. live in households that experience household food insecurity.
- Youth and children living in food insecure households have poorer development in nutritional and health status, increased risk of chronic disease, higher prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders. They are also more likely to have symptoms of depression, anxiety, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- Approximately one in five Surrey residents reported concerns for food insecurity and one in three Surrey residents reported current financial stress.
- An analysis of five different household compositions and scenarios show that once individuals or families have paid for their housing and food, there is little to no money remaining for other necessities. This report shows that it is really challenging for people on a lower income or disability and those who are lone parents or seniors with fixed income to afford a nutritious diet. Research shows that household food insecurity is an income based issue and needs income based

solutions and charitable efforts like food banks and other forms of emergency food providers.

- According to Statistics Canada, Community Health Survey reported from 2005 to 2014 that Black households are 3.56 times more likely to be food insecure than White households. Black households with children reported higher vulnerability with 36.6% of Black children identifying as food insecure compared to 12.4% of White children. Researchers found the overriding factor determining vulnerability to household food insecurity is whether one is racialized as Black.
- SOCS recognize there is not a clear understanding of emerging food related issues for the Black, African and Caribbean residents in Surrey. Therefore, SOCS formed a Black, African and Caribbean (BAC) Advisory Committee to centre the voices, experiences and knowledge of the Black, African and Caribbean descent community.
- The City of Surrey can work meaningfully with the BAC Advisory Committee to advance the city strategies and commitments. Strategies such as the Social Action Plan, the Housing Strategy, the City of Surrey Official Community Plan (OCP), Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan and Surrey Food Strategy.
- Earlier this year, the BAC Advisory Committee organized a food security survey in order to assess the status of food security in the Black, African and Caribbean population of Surrey. 89% of respondents was surveyed on their food security and 76% of their target population reported food insecurity compared to the provincial average of 15%. Approximately eight out of ten of their target population of Surrey reported experiencing food insecurity compared to the provincial average of one out of seven people. In addition, one in four respondents from the survey do not have access to culturally relevant food.
- SOCS and BAC Advisory Committee have the following recommendations and requests:
 - o Revisit bylaws for land use in high density areas and zone planning to improve community garden and other growing opportunities.
 - o Collaborate to develop a Food Strategy and Food Charter with dedicated resources to support its development.
 - o Designated public-owned agricultural land space for Black, African, and Caribbean population to grow culturally preferable foods and improve economic opportunities.
 - o Agricultural and Food Policy Committee to engage and include equity deserving group in all stages of committee work meaningfully and consistently.
 - o Sustained funding for SOCS and BAC Advisory Committee.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Seeds of Change Surrey Leader, Strategic Advisor for the Black Business Association of B.C. and Fraser Health Community Health Specialist provided the following information:

- Everyone can support and work towards a food system that provides for the community.
- Surrey has the largest Black population within B.C. In 2016, the census was self-identified at 9455 with other groups identified from the West Indies etc. which attributed to about 10,000. In 2021, the statistics was self-identified at 12,876 with 4900 who identified as Guyanese and of similar ethnicity as their country association. Surrey is the hub in terms of culturally appropriate food and community spaces specifically in the North Surrey area. There is quite a

few historically Black African Caribbean associations gathering within Surrey including the Black Business Association.

- In the survey, the geographical demographics of Black, African, and Caribbean descent was from North Surrey and Guildford.
- There is a specific zoning that does not allow for community gardens and community resources in certain neighborhoods and spaces. If possible to have City review, look at that zoning, and allow community resources and community gardens to occur within North Surrey.
- One of BAC Advisory Committee's partners are from Surrey and they are directing the community to Delta and Richmond to farm and obtain their vegetables because currently there is no space allocated in Surrey. Therefore, people from Surrey are going to other municipalities for produce. Thus, small Black, African, and Caribbean businesses are struggling with high cost of imports of certain products.
- Certain types of cultural food can tolerate the climate and can be grown in Surrey.
- Food recovery and redistribution from retailers and wholesalers go to the citizens who require food at the community level and is part of addressing food security issue.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- A committee member stated the food distribution system and food supply is controlled by economics and the corporate world which needs to be focused on more to resolve food related issues.
- It was mentioned by a committee member that there are many examples where community gardens could be implemented in high density and medium density buildings as amenity spaces where a certain percentage of landscaping is required for these uses. If there is a mandate in the OCP and zoning to have a certain percentage of the landscaping to include community gardens, additional requirement could be added to require more gardens, and developers will not incur extra costs.
- The private sector would need to bring culturally inclusive foods and this is part of the community's role. Conversations may be had with the City regarding making public spaces such as community gardens available on lands for the public and future update the OCP and zoning bylaw.
- The community gardens has to be where the community is and there has to be an understanding of how this can help the needs of the community. Community gardens must also be maintained and managed. It was recommended to consider identifying and targeting one specific area where people congregate which will be more impactful. Following that, look at the zoning bylaws and community needs around the specific location, applications for community gardens could be made to Council to look towards a solution. It was also noted that in order to ensure success of community gardens, there must be funds and resources to maintain and service the garden along with hiring or volunteering skillful people to manage the community gardens.
- There is a lot of unused agricultural land that's available where landowners would lease them at an inexpensive rate yearly.
- One of the priorities in the Agricultural Foods, Knowledge and Technology transfer program is to focus on food security and growing culturally appropriate foods could potentially be of relevance.

- The B.C. Land Matching Program from Young Agrarians was mentioned as a program that provides land matching opportunities and business support services to farmers looking for land and landowners seeking a farmer for their land.
- Metro Vancouver also has an agricultural land trust program to buy-out titles on agricultural land and size up parcels to lease portions to key partners.

M. Schutzbank put forth the following motion:

It was

Moved by R. Brar

Seconded by R. Sihota

That the Agricultural and Food Policy

Committee recommend Council to direct staff to do an exploratory review on the benefits of a food charter and how it can effect food security in City of Surrey.

Defeated

With R. Brar, H. Dhillon, P. Harrison, S. Keulen,
R. Sihota and R. Vanderende opposed.

H. Dhillon put forth a new motion:

It was

Moved by M. Schutzbank

Seconded by S. Keulen

That the Agricultural and Food Policy

Committee recommend that the General Manager of Planning and Development ask staff to provide a future presentation to the committee including information on municipal food strategies and clarification to define what is a food charter.

Carried

R. Vanderende left the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

R. Vanderende rejoined the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

This section had no items to consider.

D. REPORTS

This section had no items to consider.

M. Schutzbank left the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

M. Schutzbank rejoined the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

E. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL LAND

- The past couple of years there has been many illegal businesses on the agricultural land. A committee member stated near his neighborhood there is activities of hydro vacuuming being discharged on farm fields, soil deposition, and power washing of bins which runs into the ditches and impacts the quality of water being used to water crops. There is also an auto wrecking business, long haul parking and an oil engine repair shop on the agricultural land.
- There is a lack of bylaw enforcers.
- Lack of presence of building permits and there are several non farm businesses such as roofing companies located on agricultural land.
- On 64th Ave and 140th street, there are motor vehicles going 100 kilometers an hour which can cause potential collisions between tractors and other motor vehicles.
- Suggest staff to invite a member from Bylaws as a future agenda item at a future committee meeting.

R. Vanderende left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

R. Vanderende rejoined the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

G. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agricultural and Food Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 7, 2023 with proposed location in Meeting Room 125 A and B at Surrey Operations Centre.

H. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural and Food Policy Committee meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Bains, Acting Chairperson